

our own Constitution and its Bill of Rights. Both of our countries are former British colonies that gained their freedom after a long and difficult struggle. English continues to be an important language of commerce in India. Many Americans almost instinctively saw in Mahatma Gandhi a reflection of values that our country holds dear. During this month when we celebrate the birthday of one of America's greatest heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King, we should remember that Dr. King derived many of his ideas of nonviolent resistance to injustice from the teachings, actions, and self-sacrifice of Gandhi.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that I have to mention this, but today's celebration of Republic Day in India was marred by a bombing at a crowded stadium in Jammu, India, where Republic Day celebrations were taking place, killing 7 people and injuring 47. Another terrorist attack was staged on a parade in Srinagar. These events remind us that there are still forces trying to destabilize India—some of them receiving support and encouragement from abroad. But it is impressive to keep in mind that despite being so severely tested by the forces of terrorism, India has preserved its democratic institutions, seeks to give opportunities to people from all religious and ethnic backgrounds and moves resolutely forward with market-based economic reforms.

There is, however, good news for us to talk about. United States-India relations are looking better than they have in a long time. Two of the President's Cabinet Secretaries have been in India this month—Defense Secretary Perry and Commerce Secretary Brown, who was accompanied by the top officials from some of our major corporations. The two Secretaries' visits to India resulted in significant accomplishments on issues relating to security and trade and investment. I hope we in Congress will make it a high priority to continue this momentum and move it forward. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, which I initiated two years ago, is reorganizing in the new Congress with strong bipartisan participation. We are dedicated to steady improvement in United States-India relations and in being a voice for the 1-million-strong Asian-Indian community here in America.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me, an elected Representative of the oldest continuous democratic republic on earth, to pay tribute to the world's most populous democracy on the occasion of their great national day.

AIRLIFT ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. ELIZABETH FURSE

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 26, 1995

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, the legislation I have introduced today with bipartisan support calls for ending the C-17 program after this year's buy is completed, providing the Air Force a total of 40. In addition, my bill calls for putting in place a serious program to use more affordable, already developed aircraft to fill the remaining airlift need.

Under DOD's current C-17 only plan, we will actually encounter an airlift deficit as the planned retirement of C-141's continues. The cost of the C-17 program has increased 41

percent—\$190 billion—from the original estimate of \$190 million per plane. Based on past experience, there is every reason to believe that the C-17's program cost will continue to rise. DOD's current estimate is \$22.5 billion for 40 planes, or \$563 million each.

The Rand Corp., GAO, CBO, and DOD's cost and operational effectiveness analysis have all recently presented airlift options that would enable savings of 8-10 billion dollars or more compared to a fleet of 120 C-17's.

GAO released its report today, "C-17 Aircraft: Cost and Performance Issues," responding to the fiscal year 1994 Defense Authorization Act request for its assessment of the C-17's original justification and the effect of technical problems and cost increases on its ability to achieve original program requirements.

The report states, "Changes in the C-17's intended role, the results of DOD's cost and operational effectiveness analysis, and continued program cost growth lead us to conclude that a 120-aircraft C-17 program is not the most cost-effective way to meet airlift requirements."

Secretary of Defense Perry said yesterday that if a balanced budget amendment is approved, the Pentagon will face very major budget cuts and have an even smaller force than it does now. He went on to say that a smaller force means the Pentagon would no longer be able to carry out its two-MRC strategy.

Requirements for the first 30 days of an MRC drives our airlift planning. If we will be forced for budgetary reasons to reconsider the two-MRC strategy, the overpriced C-17 sacred cow—for which reasonable alternatives exist—needs to be one of the first items re-examined.

Among those alternatives are commercial widebodies such as 747's or MD-11's, the existing C-5, and extending the service life of our C-141's.

The C-17 continues to experience technical problems. Today's GAO report details severe airflow problems that prevent the plane from executing one mission the Army has considered critical: simultaneous airdrops of paratroopers and equipment. The problem of turbulence inside the plane that occurs when the cargo door, ramp, and side troop doors are open persists. Even after the 18th plane was delivered to the Air Force earlier this month, those simultaneous drops continue to be suspended.

I am pleased that Senator BUMPERS has introduced similar legislation in the Senate.

This bill could save taxpayers more than \$10 billion and meet our aircraft needs with more cost-effective alternatives. Throwing money at this plane that can not deliver what it promised is irresponsible in today's austere fiscal environment. We have cheaper alternatives that will keep our military strong. Every day we wait to implement them costs taxpayers millions of dollars.

TRIBUTE TO DON BLACKETER

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 26, 1995

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding citizen

from the Fourth Congressional District of Texas, Don Blacketer of the Harmon-Dial community. Mr. Blacketer died December 14, 1994, at the age of 75 at the Sam Rayburn Memorial VA Center in Bonham. Funeral services were held at McKenzie United Methodist Church in Honey Grove, where he was a member, and burial was at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Ladonia.

Born on September 27, 1919, in Leonard, TX, Don Blacketer was the son of Marcus Anderson Blacketer and Julia Mae Mullins Blacketer. He was a World War II veteran, serving his country in the United States Army under General George S. Patton's command in Europe. Following the war he married Perry Lillianell McCowan in the Dial community and distinguished himself in farming and ranching. Mr. Blacketer was a member of the producers board of the American Soybean Association and was past president of the Texas Soybeans Association. He appeared before our congressional committees to share his knowledge and to give his testimony. I was always proud to introduce him to the Congress—and to claim him as a constituent and as a friend.

Mr. Blacketer also devoted himself to helping improve the quality of life in the Dial community. He was instrumental in efforts to find funding to upgrade the community's water supply system and took the time to contact my office and other government officials concerning possible grant and loan programs for this project. He was a concerned citizen and a man who cared enough about his community to act on his concerns.

Mr. Blacketer is survived by a son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Pam Blacketer of Rockwall; a sister, Madyelene Pritchett of Sherman; and two granddaughters, Rachel and Sarah Blacketer of Rockwall. He will be missed by his family and by his many friends, and his contributions to the Harmon-Dial community will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay a final tribute to this exemplary citizen, Don Blacketer, who distinguished himself in his service to his country, his community, and his family.

MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST LAND CONVEYANCE/ROLLA, MO

HON. BILL EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 26, 1995

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing a measure that is vital to the rural economic development efforts of south-central Missouri—specifically Phelps County and surrounding areas. This legislation will authorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture to convey land within the Mark Twain National Forest to the city of Rolla, MO.

The city of Rolla has been diligent in its plan to utilize the U.S. Forest Service's district ranger office site in the development and construction of a regional tourist center. I feel it important to note that tourism is the second largest industry in Missouri and this tourist center has already attracted great interest along with needed dollars to the regional Rolla economy.